

THE BOYS OF 1745

AT THE CAPTURE OF LOUISBOURG



Stories of American History

THE BOYS OF 1745

AT THE

CAPTURE OF LOUISBOURG

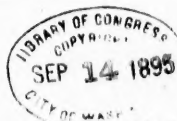
BY

JAMES OTIS

AUTHOR OF "TOBY TYLER," "THE BOYS' REVOLT," "JENNY WREN'S BOARDING-HOUSE," "JERRY'S FAMILY," ETC.



Illustrated



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ESTES AND LAURIAT
1895



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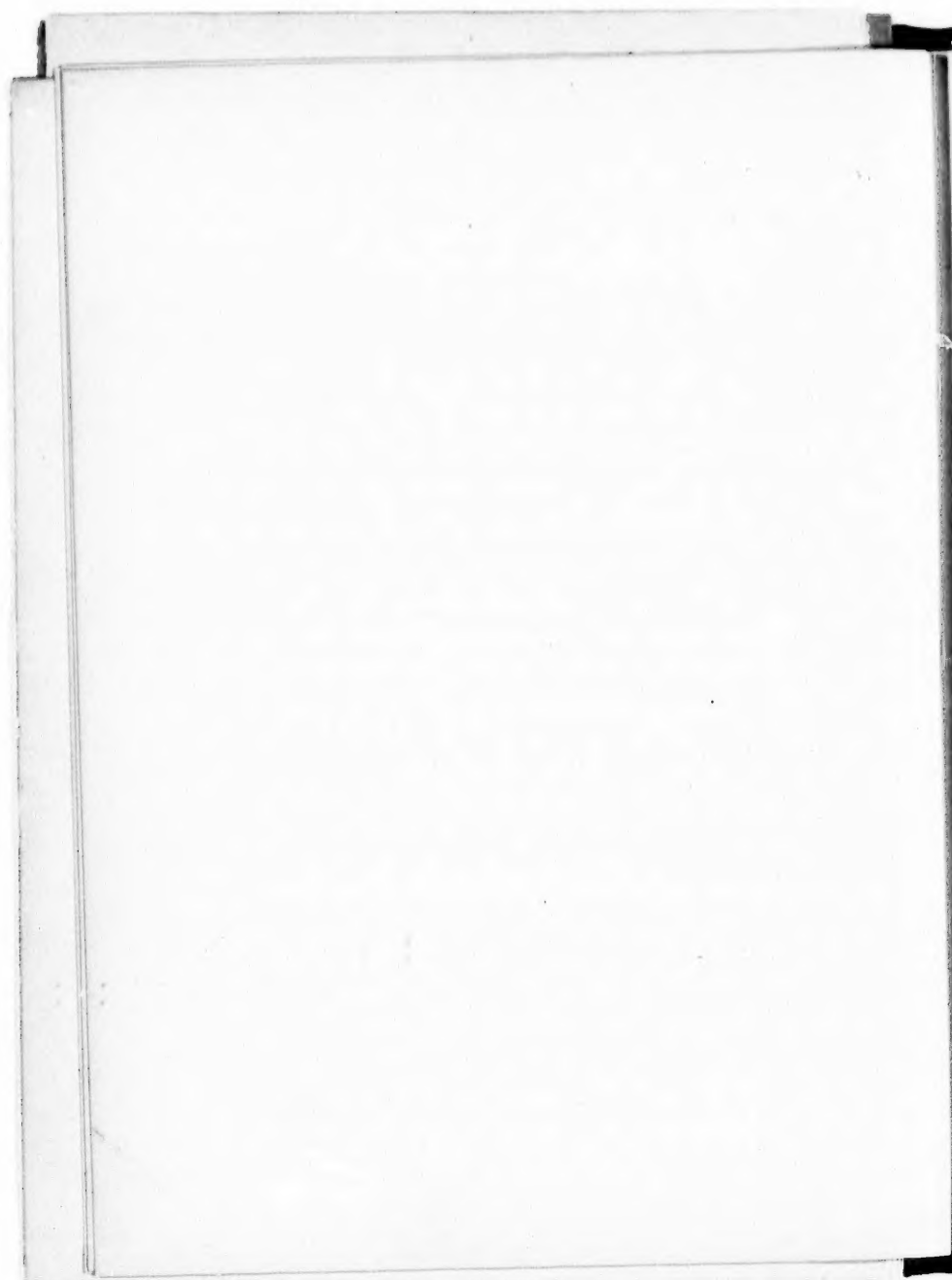
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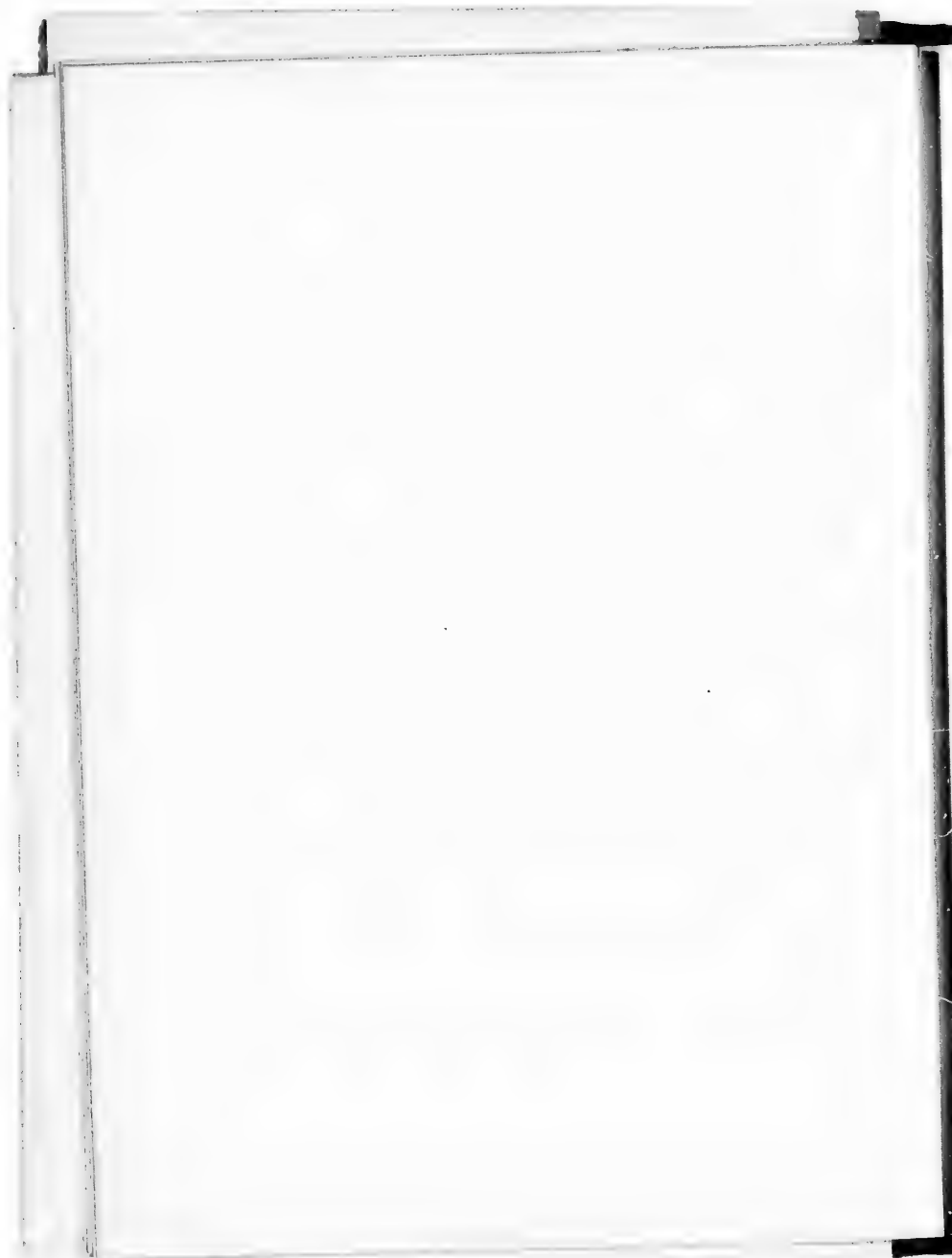
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THE BOYS OF 1745

AT THE CAPTURE OF LOUISBOURG.

CHAPTER I.

VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS.

FROM the middle of February until the 24th of March (on the day when the fleet of ninety transports and thirteen vessels of war sailed from Nantasket Roads, in Boston Harbour, bound on an expedition of war to Nova Scotia), the town of Portsmouth, in the colony of New Hampshire, was in a ferment of excitement.

That the colonies were sufficiently strong to assist the mother country in war surprised the thoughtless to the verge of bewilderment, and many of the better-informed citizens gravely questioned whether it was not a fool-hardy piece of bravado to make an attack upon a place so strongly fortified as was the French port of Louisbourg in Nova Scotia.

Groups of people might have been seen conversing on the streets at all hours of the day, and even late in the evening, without fear of reprimand from those in author-

ity, and it was an unusual occurrence when men or boys passed each other without at least referring to the daring campaign about to be begun by the colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire.

Therefore it was that when Philip Towle and Richard Sanbourne met in front of Master Leavitt's store on a certain morning in March, instead of discussing the possibility of trapping musquash or mink before the ice had left the stream, they spoke of the proposed expedition, and Philip startled his companion not a little by announcing, boldly, —

"I rowed across to Master Pepperrell's last evening."

"Master Pepperrell? I should think you might call him general, since he has been commissioned by the Governors of three colonies."

"Then it was to General Pepperrell's that I went," Philip replied, with a smile.

"What had you to find there?"

"I wanted to see Major John Storer, who is seeking recruits."

"Have you taken it into your head to go to war, Phil Towle?"

"Why not? I was sixteen years old last January, and already have arms as the law requires. As for the uniform, I can do without one, or get mother to change these clothes over. Sam Lowrey has already signed the rolls, and does n't intend to trouble himself about a soldier's coat."

"But what made you think of such a thing?"

"The need of money, Dick. You know how hard it is to earn as much as may be needed for taxes, and the furs I have taken this season won't sell for enough to pay them. Mother does all she can, and a hard time she has of it, poor thing, since father was killed."

"It is not much you can earn as a soldier. I am told that the wages are only twenty-five shillings a month, which means but fourteen sterling, — not quite a sixpence a day."

"It will be better than nothing; and there should be prize-money, so Major Storer says. Even without it, two months' pay would be a great aid to mother just now."

"Then you have decided?"

"Yes, it amounts to that; for unless something happens I shall enlist this evening."

"And the major told you there would be prize-money for the soldiers?"

"He said there *should* be, in case the town was captured."

"I suppose the soldiers will be allowed to loot it?" Dick said, thoughtfully.

"It is usually considered their privilege, I am told."

"Phil, I have a mind to go with you."

"I wish you might, but there is no necessity in your case, as in mine."

"That makes no difference. I don't believe father would object, particularly after I tell him about the prize-money."

Philip made no reply. He did not wish to influence

his companion in any way, much as he would be pleased to have him for a comrade. To him, the enlistment was a means by which he might assist his widowed mother, while Dick had no such inducement; his father was believed to be blest with a goodly share of the world's goods, having been called a "miser" by more than one



reputable citizen, therefore it seemed as if his son might well keep out of danger, unless his patriotism was at boiling point, which was not at all probable.

With Phil, enlistment appeared to be the only way by which he could earn the money his mother needed; he did not choose to become a soldier because of a love for

glory, or the thought that his country needed him. An invasion of Nova Scotia, whose inhabitants had never done any wrong to the colony of New Hampshire, was a matter which failed to arouse his enthusiasm.

Neither was Dick enthusiastic over the assault upon the fortified town, save as it might give him booty; and where anything of value was concerned, he could be almost as "close-fisted" as his father.

When these two boys presented themselves as recruits that evening, Major Storer did not question their motives, but received them as gladly as he would have received any other able-bodied candidates for military honours who might be between the prescribed ages of "sixteen and sixty."

After having been accepted as volunteer soldiers, whose services were to be paid for by the colony, the new recruits were allowed to spend the greater portion of their time as best pleased them. There was no question of living in barracks, because none were provided by the Government; it was necessary to spend two hours each day in drill, and then the embryo heroes were at liberty to go where they wished, save on four especial occasions, when Parson Moody preached even longer sermons than usual, to the supposed improvement of their military education, as well as the salvation of their souls.

Dick never lost sight of the idea that it might be possible for him to suddenly become rich, in case the town was captured and sacked; but Phil's mind was constantly dwelling upon the coming separation from his mother.

There was never a fellow in Portsmouth who could truthfully have called him a "sissy;" but he had not been absent from home a single night since he was able to remember, and it was not pleasant to think of the time when it would be impossible to kiss his mother good-night.

The day of parting came all too soon, and on the morning of the twentieth of March, with thirty others of his company, among whom was Dick Sanbourne, he went on board the twelve-gun sloop "Vigilant," to be carried to Nantasket Roads, the rendezvous of the squadron.

This particular squad thought they were very fortunate in being drafted to one of the war-vessels, instead of being quartered on board an over-crowded transport, and the majority of them were in the highest spirits, believing it would be but a comparatively short time before they returned, crowned with wreaths of victory. Perhaps they did not count on coming back wearing veritable wreaths, but they certainly expected to be greeted as conquerors.

Phil was far from being in a jolly mood. He had parted with his mother shortly before daybreak, and the tears were not yet dried on his cheeks when the sloop's mooring-lines were cast off.

It was but a short journey to the rendezvous, thanks to the favouring breeze, and the ocean did not treat them roughly, therefore the amateur soldiers were in good bodily condition when they arrived, and Phil found an antidote for homesickness in the stirring and wonderful scenes around him.

The entire fleet lay at anchor in the Roads, and it was

such a spectacle as the soldiers from Portsmouth had never witnessed before.

A hundred and three vessels, thirteen of them armed, with red-coated men on every deck, and from the mast-head of the frigate "Massachusetts" floating the flag which bore the motto, "*Nil desperandum. Christo duce,*" which had been suggested by Parson George Whitefield.

One day was allowed the recruits for sight-seeing when Phil and Dick visited Boston for the first time and then came the departure, when there was such an accompaniment of noisy enthusiasm that Phil had no opportunity to indulge in tears. Besides, if he had felt like crying he would have forced the tears back at whatever pang, for he was a soldier, and as such should be too manly to whimper like a baby.

Three hours later a great change came over the red-coated portion of the "Vigilant's" crew. The ocean was no longer in a placid mood; the wind blew with more violence than seemed necessary, and between decks lay twenty-four of the thirty soldiers fast in the clutches of the malady of the sea.

Phil felt confident he was beset with an illness from which he would never recover, and Dick, who shared his bunk, said, mournfully,—

"If there were forty towns to be sacked, and I had known we would be delivered up to such an attack as this, not even General Pepperrell himself could have induced me to come."

"It is terrible!" Phil moaned, thinking of his mother and home.

"We have been cheated!" and Dick endeavoured to assume a sitting posture, but desisted after striking his head painfully hard against the deck-timbers. "Is this the pleasure excursion that was pictured? Major Storer said men ought to pay for such a privilege, instead of expecting to be paid! I wonder how much he thinks would be a fair price for me to pay for my enjoyment just now?"

Phil made no reply. He was conscious only of the sensations of faintness and nausea, and did not dare to speak.

A sailor, who came below on some errand, announced that a northeast storm had sprung up, and the two boys were quite convinced it could be nothing less than a hurricane.

Whether it was a storm or hurricane, the foul weather continued until the "Vigilant" entered the harbour of Canseau, the fifth day of April, and Phil and Dick crept on deck, looking like boys who had just arisen from a fever.

And it was not surprising that they did look haggard and worn. During the entire passage neither had been able to partake of anything more nourishing than tea or small fragments of ship's bread; but hunger or weakness was alike forgotten in the happy relief of being able to walk about.

Dick's countenance fell as he saw the small village of Canseau, which the French lately took from the English, but which had changed masters once more when the fleet arrived.

"If Louisbourg looks anything like this settlement, we shan't be benefited by looting the town," he said, ruefully. "Except fish, there is nothing here worth carrying away. We were fools for coming."

"That may be true in your case, but not in mine," Phil replied, with a feeble attempt at a smile. "Each night I have said to myself that another sixpence has been earned for mother, and if the money could not be gotten in any other way, I would endure the suffering over again for her sake."

"Sixpences don't count with me," Dick replied, loftily. "Let's go on shore; I want to feel the solid earth under my feet once more."

"Will it be allowed?"

"Who is here to stop us?"

"Major Storer should give us permission first."

"I don't intend to ask him. When there is any fighting to be done he can come to me about it; but he has no authority while we are lying here idle."

Phil's idea of a soldier's duty was different, and he refused to leave the sloop, ardently though he desired to be on shore.

A boat lay at the gangway; there was no guard near at hand, and Richard Sanbourne, the son of his father, took possession of her as boldly as if he was in sole command of the expedition.

By a singular fortune no one in authority observed Dick when he left the sloop; but the boat was soon missed, and in a short time not only the captain, but Lieutenant-

Colonel William Vaughan, of the New Hampshire forces, who chanced to be on board at the time, knew what had been done by a private soldier.

The officer was particularly angry because such a breach of discipline had been committed by one of his own command, and a squad of men were sent at once in search of Dick.

Phil was not called upon to aid in capturing the audacious soldier, and congratulated himself on being spared the disagreeable duty of assisting in making a prisoner of his friend; but before nightfall he found himself in a much more unpleasant position than if he had been detailed as one of the searchers.

Dick was on board again within an hour from the time he had left so unceremoniously, and conducted at once to the cabin, where he remained ten or fifteen minutes. Then he was escorted on deck by two soldiers, who guarded him closely until word had been brought to Phil that he was to stand watch over the prisoner until further orders.

For an instant there was a wild idea in the boy's mind of refusing to do such duty; but, fortunately, he realized that by such a course he would not be aiding his friend, and would get himself into very serious difficulties.

"There is no need of remaining below," the sergeant said, as he led the way forward. "You can keep him here without trouble, and as soon as we get some handcuffs from the frigate you will be relieved. The orders are to shoot him if he attempts to escape, so see to it that your gun is loaded and ready for use."

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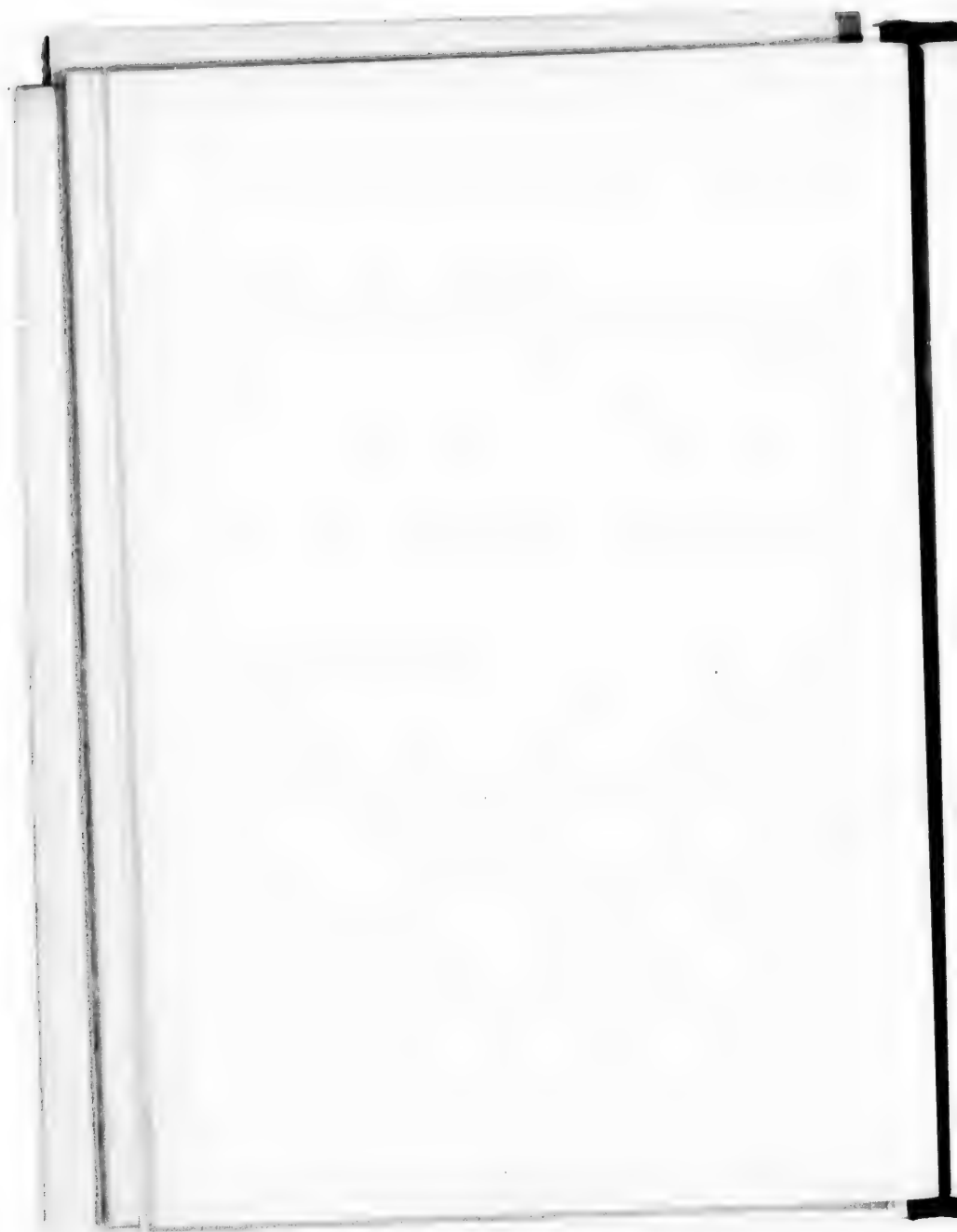
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Dick had not spoken since he came from the cabin, but when he was left comparatively alone with Phil, he said in a low, angry tone, —

"If these fellows think they can treat me in this manner because I am to be paid a sixpence a day, they'll soon discover their mistake."

"But you are a soldier, Dick, and as such must obey orders, one of which is not to absent yourself from quarters without permission."

"Does Bill Vaughan fancy he can make me come at his beck and call? It isn't six months since he wanted to borrow money of my father, and here he is trying to make out I'm his prisoner!"

"But you *are* his prisoner, and he has the power to make matters very uncomfortable for you, Dick, being an officer of such high rank. Don't rage, when it will only end in injury to yourself; but beg pardon for what has been done, and most likely nothing more will come of your little excursion."

"You must think I'm a fool to beg Bill Vaughan's pardon!"

"I shall surely think you one if you don't."

Dick did not take kindly to such advice, and moved a few paces from his friend, remaining silent several moments, when he turned suddenly as he said, —

"Of course you don't count on carrying out the orders given by the sergeant."

"What else can I do?"

"Turn your back when I want to slip over the bow."

"You would n't think of trying to swim ashore?"

"Why not?"

"The gravest reason is, that the harbour is filled with ice, and you would be chilled to the bone before swimming a dozen strokes. Then, again, you might be out of the frying-pan into the fire ashore, where it would be an easy matter to recapture you."



"I'm not so certain about that. Say, Phil, it will be dark in half an hour. When I say the word will you look aft five minutes or so?"

"I don't dare to disobey orders, Dick."

"You're a sneak, that's what you are! I shall go over, whether you help me or not, and once we're back in Portsmouth, I'll have a long score to settle with you!"

Phil was too deeply hurt to make any reply, and Dick leaned over the rail, as if no longer desirous of talking.

The sentinel felt quite certain his friend would not attempt to carry into execution the threat made, and walked slowly to and fro, wishing most earnestly that some other soldier had been selected for the disagreeable duty.

The moments passed until the sun disappeared in the western sky; the gloom of evening hung heavily over the fleet, shutting out from view the shore, although so close at hand, and Phil turned to reason with the prisoner just as the latter leaped into the icy water.

For an instant the boy was too much alarmed and surprised to make the least outcry. Even though his own life had depended upon the act, he could not have discharged a weapon at Dick.

While one might have counted twenty he remained silent and motionless, and then cried at the full strength of his lungs, —

"Man overboard! Man overboard!"

A dozen sailors and soldiers were by his side almost as soon as the words had been uttered, but even then nothing could be seen of the escaping prisoner.

Two hours later the boats returned from searching the harbour and shore, and the report was that the labour had been in vain.

"He must have sunk almost as soon as he struck the icy water, sir," the sergeant reported to the captain. "It don't stand to reason a boy could swim a dozen yards while it is so cold."

Next morning, on the books of the company was the following entry:

"April 5th, 1745. Richard Sanbourne, while under guard for disobedience of orders, leaped overboard, and was drowned."

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CHAPTER II.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

PHIL'S grief because of the untimely fate of Dick Sanbourne was most intense. He reproached himself with being responsible for the sad affair, although he could not explain why he was at fault.

Dick's chances for escape would not have been bettered had the sentinel offered him every assistance in his power, while there could be no question but that matters might have been readily adjusted had the prisoner followed his friend's advice.

The young recruit had been guilty of insubordination; but, on this expedition that was not a very serious matter, for the officers and men were friends or acquaintances, and there was no very decided attempt to exact strict military obedience.

Phil's comrades, on learning that he reproached himself as having contributed in some degree to his friend's probable death, used every effort to disabuse his mind of such an idea, and the result was that he soon found himself the object of so much attention as to cause positive embarrassment. Twice did Colonel Vaughan call him into the cabin of the sloop to consider the matter carefully, and on each occasion did his best to convince the young

soldier that he was in no wise responsible for the deplorable event; but without success.

On the following Sunday Phil asked permission to attend the services held by Parson Moody, and listened to the unusually long sermon intently, although there was much which would ordinarily have distracted his attention. Save for the words of the clergyman, the Sabbath presented nothing of that sanctity so marked at home; on every hand were troops being drilled, workmen moving rapidly to and fro, or little knots of men discussing secular matters with so much vehemence as to almost drown the preacher's trumpet-like tones.

To Phil's disappointment, the good man made no reference to anything which might give his troubled heart relief. The text, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power," was used with reference to the probable capture of the fortified town, and the proposed destruction of such places of worship as did not meet with Parson Moody's approbation.

He returned to his quarters more depressed than ever, and the three weeks of inactivity which elapsed before the expedition could proceed, because of the ice which yet blocked the entrance to the harbour of Louisbourg, only aided in increasing his melancholy.

Then came the day when anticipations of immediate battle drove from his mind all thoughts not connected with a soldier's duties. The fleet set sail for Gabarus Bay, and, twenty-four hours later, the troupes were disembarked before the town which was to be captured.

It had not been possible to surprise the enemy, therefore those who had anticipated a sudden victory were forced to prepare for a regular siege, in which raw recruits were to try their metal against the strongest fortifications in the New World, defended by veterans.

There was a slight resistance to the landing; but Phil saw nothing of this first violence. The "Vigilant" had not yet arrived inside the bay when it occurred, and, owing to the wind, the rattle of musketry could not be heard from her decks.

During the twenty-four hours which followed, Phil was wretched, both in body and mind. The troops were stationed near the shore, with no shelter save such as could be found amid the stunted bushes, and the wind, damp from its long journey over the sea, seemed as cold as in winter.

On the morning after the embarkation word was brought to Phil that Colonel Vaughan wished to speak with him, and the boy went at once to the small cluster of fishermen's shanties where the officers of the expedition were quartered.

"We are about to make a reconnoissance, lad, and it is my fancy to have you with me. You will be exposed to less danger by remaining in the ranks, therefore it is a request rather than a command."

"I shall be very glad to accompany you, sir," Phil replied, modestly. "I expected to be confronted by danger when I enlisted as a soldier."

"Well said, lad. See to it that you carry all your blankets, and return here immediately."

Phil's heart was beating violently when he reported for duty. One glance at the apparently impregnable fortifications had been sufficient to convince him there would be plenty of blood spilled before victory could be won by either party, and he was about to begin his portion of the struggle.

Four hundred men had been drawn up in line, and when Colonel Vaughan emerged from the huts, this body of troops was marched directly toward the hills which overlooked the town.

Phil was not burdened with arduous duties. He remained near the commander, and from time to time performed certain trifling services. It appeared very much as if the colonel had attached the boy to his staff as an act of kindness, rather than from the idea that he could be of especial benefit. The troops marched as near the town as was deemed safe, and there were ordered to salute the enemy with three cheers, rather an odd proceeding, as Phil thought. Then, without further demonstrations, the command made a *détour* behind the hills in the rear of Grand Battery, which was situated in such a position as to command the entrance to the harbour, near "extensive magazines of naval stores."

The men understood why they had been called out, when orders were given to destroy all the property not protected by the guns of the battery, and during the remainder of the day Phil witnessed such deeds as he had believed could never be enacted. Valuable stores were given to the flames; buildings sacked of such ammunition

as could readily be carried away, and then sacrificed, and a spirit of wanton destruction seemed to have taken possession of all.

It was a picture of war enlivened by no acts of heroism.

Not until an hour after nightfall was the work finished, and then Colonel Vaughan believed it imprudent to return



to the main army, four miles distant, lest he fall into an ambush.

The soldiers bivouacked near the ruins of the buildings, where the heat from the glowing embers tempered the wind to the blanketless men, and, when a portion of the rations brought with them had been eaten, each one disposed of himself for the night as best suited his fancy.

Sentinels were stationed, as a matter of course, yet they were not so numerous but that a large body of the enemy might have approached unobserved; and had the occupants of the battery made a *sortie* at any time from

midnight until morning, the surprise must have been complete.

Colonel Vaughan was not lodged more comfortably than his men. He laid down between two half-burned timbers, at a point nearest the enemy, and a dozen yards from him was Phil.

It was a long while before the boy's eyes closed in slumber, and then it seemed as if he had but just fallen into unconsciousness when a pressure upon his arm aroused him.

The fires were burning so low that but little light illumined the darkness, and Phil felt, rather than saw, that some one had crawled under his blanket beside him.

The first thought was that a comrade, less generously provided with coverings against the cold, was taking advantage of his belongings, and he settled down for another nap, regardless of the intruder, when a voice whispered in his ear, —

"Don't you know me?"

Phil sprang up in alarm, for he recognized the voice of Dick, — Dick whom he had firmly believed was dead; but the intruder pulled him roughly down as he whispered fiercely, —

"Keep quiet, or some of the sentinels will see me; I don't intend to give Bill Vaughan a chance to make me prisoner again."

"But where have you come from? How did you get here? I thought you —"

"Believed I was dead, eh?" And, despite his danger, Dick gave vent to an audible chuckle.

"Every one supposed you drowned within a few moments after leaping into the water."

"Then every one must be a fool. So long as I kept well under the surface, I did n't suffer from the cold. It was when I crawled out that trouble began. I thought I should freeze to death."

"How did you avoid it?"

"Kept in motion. Ran the best I knew how till I got rid of the numbness, and you can fancy I didn't remain near the shore. About a mile away I struck a small hut where a fisherman lived, and there I got thawed out. It cost me two shillings to prevent him from taking me back, but I would n't have begrudged twice the amount."

"But you were then at Canseau, and now we are near Louisbourg."

"You seem to have a fairly good idea of affairs, even though you are serving under such a chuckle-head as Bill Vaughan. We *are* near Louisbourg."

"But how did you get here?"

"The fisherman is a Frenchman. He did n't care to remain at Canseau after the English took possession, and made all haste to reach Louisbourg. By the expenditure of two shillings more I was allowed to come with him. The price was much too high, for I did my full share of work in running the boat, and without my assistance he never would have arrived."

"We were told the harbour was blocked with ice."

"So it was; but we could land almost anywhere from our dory, and once ashore on this island, I turned Frenchman. I have been stationed at the Grand Battery, which you passed yesterday."

"Then how does it happen you are here with me?"

"I'll tell you a big secret; Phil, and if you are sharp you can turn it to your advantage. The battery is to be abandoned; already the men are marching out. They are cowards, for half their number could hold it against the crowd Bill Vaughan has brought here; but they won't listen to me, and to-morrow you people can take possession."

"How will it be of benefit to me?"

"Wait until that money-borrowing Vaughan leaves this place, and then take possession yourself. General Pepperrell will hear what you have done, and cannot fail to give a handsome reward, one-half of which you must turn over to me. That is why I run the risk to pay you a visit to-night. If you work this matter properly there will be more in it for us than we could get by sacking Louisbourg, even though we entered the town in the front ranks."

Phil remained silent. He failed to understand the matter as Dick apparently did. In case the battery *was* to be abandoned, he was not the one who should reap the benefit of the discovery, and just at that moment it seemed his duty to tell Colonel Vaughan all he had heard.

Dick suspected the thoughts which were in his comrade's mind, and said, threateningly, —

"Don't think you can get the credit and all the reward at the same time. I have put myself in your power, so far as Bill Vaughan may be able to do me an injury, but pledge my word that you'll never live to see Portsmouth again if you try to play me false."

"I haven't any idea of trying to play you or any one false," Phil replied, indignantly. "I didn't ask you to come with the story of the abandonment of the battery, and most likely the men will discover what has been done as soon as daybreak. My getting a reward for reporting what another could see as well as I is nonsense."

"It's sound common sense if you have courage enough to carry it out properly. Manage to loiter behind when the troops leave, and then go boldly into the works; I'll see to it that a messenger is at hand to carry the joyful tidings, and you can hold the place alone until men are sent from headquarters to take possession. You will make your name famous; I shall be revenged on Bill Vaughan, for of course he will be reprimanded for not discovering such a valuable piece of news, and both of us will make money out of the transaction."

"Look here, Dick," Phil said, suddenly, as a plan for changing the subject of the conversation occurred to him; "do you know what risks you have taken in coming here with a scheme to make a few shillings?"

"You mean that Vaughan may get hold of me?"

"That is also possible; but it may be a very serious matter so far as your new friends are concerned. If they should learn that you have been here, visiting the enemy,

can't you see what would happen? You would be considered a spy, and hanged at the shortest notice. This is war, instead of a pleasure excursion, as we were led to believe, and when a man or a boy either, for that matter, is suspected of giving information to the enemy, the end comes cruelly quick."

"I have n't given any information," Dick replied, with an effort to speak calmly, but his friend understood that he was thoroughly frightened.

"That is true; but if the French should learn of this visit, could you persuade them that such was the fact?"

"They've got more sense than the men you are serving."

"That would n't prevent them from dealing in the usual manner with a spy. As the matter now stands, you are liable to be arrested and shot by the English for having deserted in the face of the enemy, or hung by the French."

"As you figure it, I might as well consider myself dead already," Dick replied, grimly, but his voice trembled perceptibly, despite his attempts to render it steady.

"I believe you will soon come to some violent end unless you take a sharp turn at once. Why not give yourself up to Colonel Vaughan now? I am certain everything can be made right, more especially since you bring such good news, and it will be plain sailing in the future."

"Do you think I would let him get hold of me again?"

"You must forget that he is a townsman whom you have known well, and look upon him only as an officer in the colonial forces."

"I'll look upon him for just what he is, and nothing more. It is easy to see that you are trying to curry favour with the villain, and I may as well go back. Remember this, Phil Towle, if you do not come into my scheme for getting a reward out of General Pepperrell, you are to hold your tongue regarding what I have told you."

"I don't know what I ought to do," Phil replied, in a tone of perplexity.

"I do, and if you try to get the best of me there'll be more trouble for you than there is in this whole business of attempting to capture Louisbourg. Don't dare so much as dream of what I have said unless you are willing to do exactly as I direct. I am going now, but it will be a simple matter to get at you if there is any necessity for so doing."

Dick began to crawl out of the blankets without rising, and Phil, paying no attention to the threat, said, imploringly, —

"Don't run such a risk, Dick! Stay here, and I will do my best to get you out of the scrape in which you placed yourself by going on shore without permission."

"You'll do nothing unless I say the word, remember that! If you give the slightest hint to Bill Vaughan of what I told you —"

Dick did not conclude the threat, probably believing it would be more terrifying if incomplete, and almost before Phil was aware that he had started, the visitor was lost to view in the darkness.

CHAPTER III.

A CHANCE SHOT.

THERE was no possibility that Philip Towle, private, in the colonial forces from New Hampshire, would be able to sleep very much on this night after the destruction of the enemy's naval stores.

That which the visitor had told him was sufficient to drive from his mind all thoughts of everything save the proper course to be pursued.

It appeared as if his duty as a soldier demanded that he give the startling information to Colonel Vaughan at once ; but he was deterred by the thought that it would also be necessary to explain how he learned the news, in which case Dick's position would become more serious than it already was.

Had it been a secret, the keeping of which might have involved possible loss of life, he would not have hesitated ; but it was only a question of taking possession of the battery a few hours sooner or later, and he finally decided there could be no harm in allowing matters to remain as they were.

Never for an instant did he entertain the idea of trying to gain a reward, as Dick had suggested.

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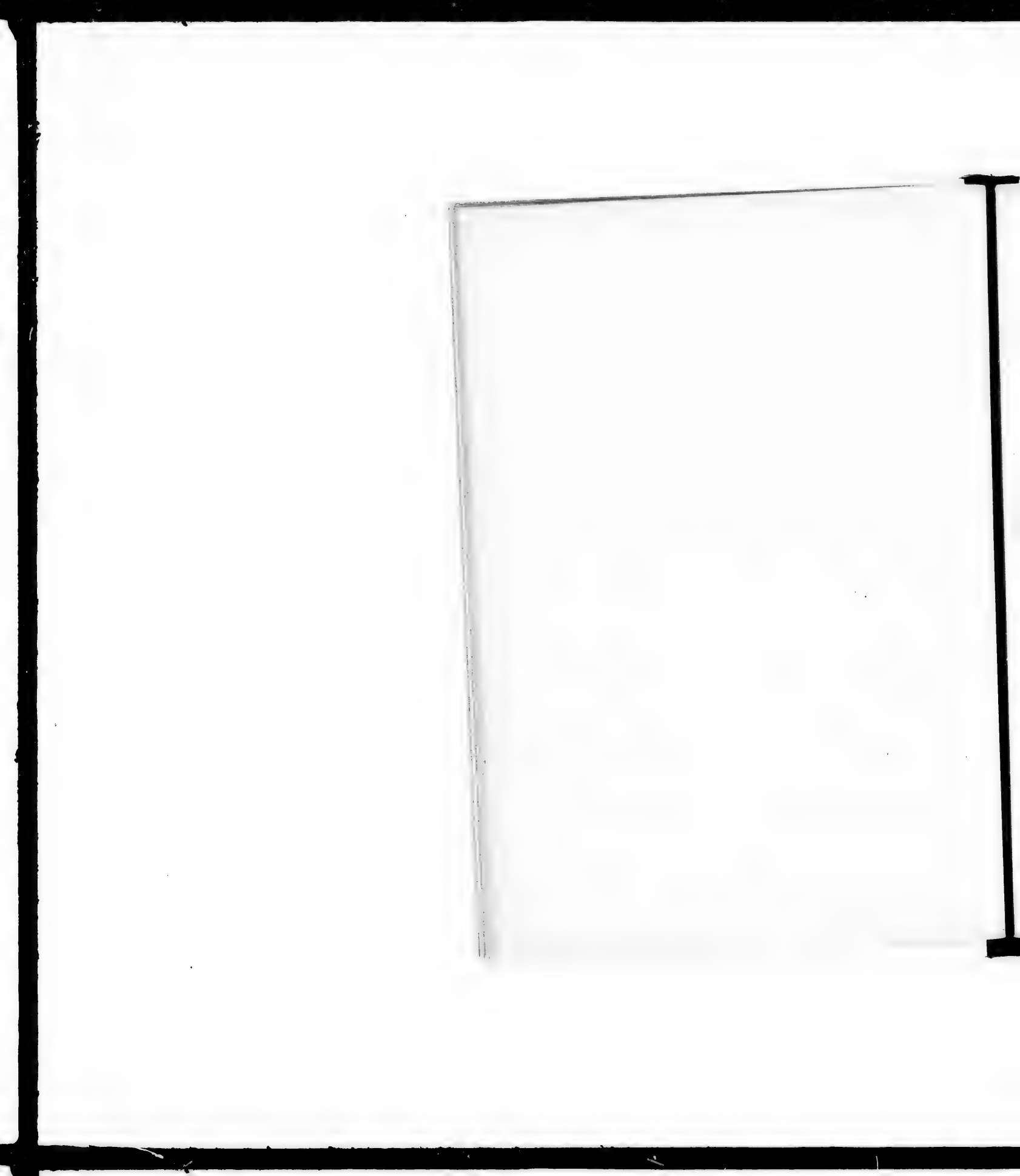
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sun rose he was the first member of the party ready for the duties of the day.

Eagerly he gazed toward that splendid fortification known as the Grand Battery instantly it was sufficiently light to see surrounding objects, and there was certainly good reason to believe Dick had told nothing more than the truth.

Not a man could be seen in or about the works, while on the previous afternoon it had been possible to distinguish the sentinels as they paced to and fro.

Colonel Vaughan's first act after awakening was to send all the troops, save a dozen men, back to the shore, since there was apparently nothing more to be done in that vicinity.

With the small squad the colonel ate breakfast, chatting cheerily with Phil, meanwhile, on indifferent topics, and not until fully half an hour had elapsed did he show any inclination to retrace his steps.

It seemed strange to Phil that not a single member of the party took notice of the fact that the enemy's sentinels could no longer be seen, and in the hope that some one might note the works more particularly, he asked several questions concerning them.

"That battery will do us a power of harm before we succeed in reducing it," the colonel replied, without so much as glancing in the direction Phil most desired. "It is exceptionally strong, and the loss of life must necessarily be great when we finally assault it, as we shall be forced to do before the main works can be captured."

Then Vaughan talked with some of the elder members of the party as to the route they would take in returning to the shore, and Phil realized he must speak more plainly if the evacuation was to be discovered.

"Colonel," he cried, suddenly, as if his attention had but just been attracted to the subject, "isn't it strange that we can't see any sentinels this morning? They were in full view last night."

This proved sufficient.

All gazed intently at the frowning works, and after some discussion, the little party moved yet nearer.

"Their flag is no longer flying!" Colonel Vaughan exclaimed. "It does n't seem possible such a strong post could be abandoned, and yet it surely has that appearance."

It was possible there might be in this apparent evacuation an ambush planned, and instead of venturing boldly inside, the colonel hired an Indian from Cape Cod, who had accompanied the troop as guide, to make an examination.

In less than five minutes after the Indian had crept through one of the embrasures, the gate was thrown open, and the small force took possession of the place which it had been supposed would cost many lives in the taking.

"Can you make your way back to General Pepperrell's headquarters?" Colonel Vaughan asked Phil, shortly after they were inside the works.

"I do not think I should have any difficulty in doing so, sir."

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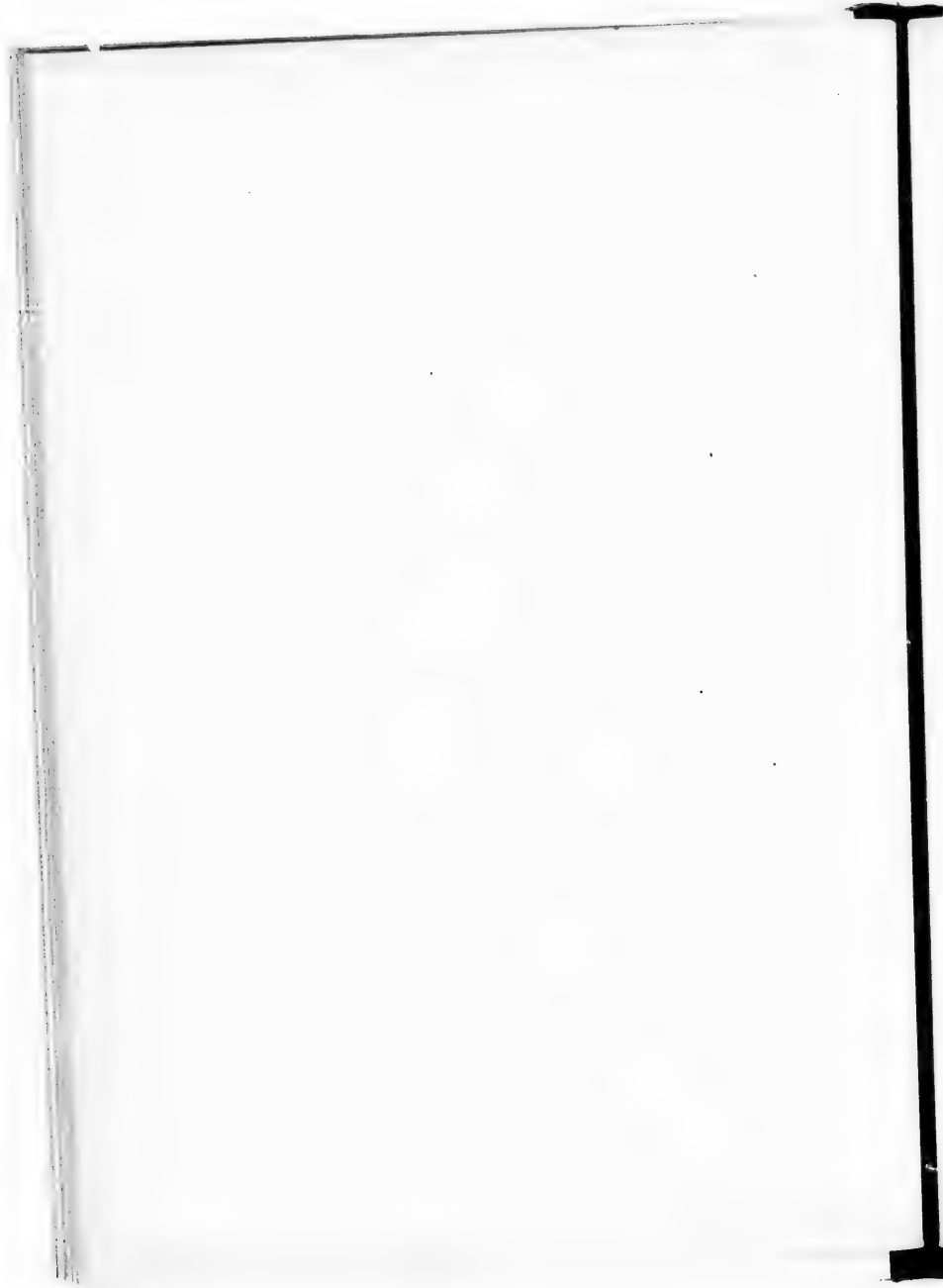
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"Then carry him a message, and I venture to say he will receive no visitor to-day who brings better news."

He wrote hurriedly the following words :

"May it please your honour to be informed that by the grace of God, and the courage of thirteen men, I entered the royal battery about nine o'clock, and am waiting for reinforcement and a flag."

Phil started off at full speed, giving no heed to the brambles which tore his clothes and scratched his face as he pressed through the tangled underbrush. His only thought was to reach headquarters as soon as possible, that a sufficient number of men to hold the battery might be sent before the enemy could discover how needlessly they had been alarmed.

He arrived in good season, and when admitted to General Pepperrell's presence was breathing heavily from the fatigue of the rapid and painful journey.

"You bring brave news, young sir," the general said, in a tone of glad surprise, after reading the brief note. "I judge you have lost no time on the way."

"It was necessary I should get here quickly, sir, for men are needed to hold the works."

"They shall be sent without delay, and here is something which will keep you in remembrance of this day's fortunate happenings."

The general handed Phil two gold coins, a greater amount of money than the boy had ever seen at one time before, and was about to make some further remark when Colonel Messerve entered, looking thoroughly mystified, as he cried, —

"Four boats loaded with men have left the town, evidently bound in the direction of the Grand Battery! Vaughan must be in that vicinity!"

Instantly all was confusion; orders were given hurriedly, rapidly executed, and it seemed to Phil he had not been in camp five minutes when two hundred men were on the double-quick to reinforce their comrades.

From where he stood, the boy could see Vaughan and his small troop drawn up in line on the beach to oppose the intended landing, and he had the satisfaction of watching the brave fellows hold the enemy in check until those who had been sent in support arrived.

Colonel Vaughan returned to headquarters after Brigadier Waldo and his regiment were in peaceful possession of the battery, and Phil presented himself for duty.

"It will be a long while, now the city is invested, before we shall see any more fighting, so set about putting up something which will serve you as a camp. It has been ordered that all the spare sails in the fleet be sent ashore, with which to make tents; but I fancy a boy like you can soon build a better shelter than they will form. You may report to your captain that you are on detached duty under me, and after the hut is built, let me know."

By this means Phil escaped the heavy work of aiding in the landing of the guns and stores, which was most arduous as well as dangerous, and before nightfall he had constructed a shanty which would protect him from the wind, if not the rain.

It was built of spruce boughs, with turf laid around the sides, and was by no means the poorest of the many rude substitutes for camps to be seen on either side of the brook running from the hills a couple of miles southwest of the town.

After the transports had been unladen came the labour of dragging cannon to the spot selected for the first battery, on Green Hill, two miles from where the stores were landed, and this labour was excessive, as Phil had ample opportunity to learn.

While there was nothing to be done save to make preparations for bombarding the town, it was not reasonable that Colonel Vaughan would keep the boy on detached duty very long, therefore he was forced to do his share of the fatiguing work.

During two weeks he aided in dragging the heavy pieces of ordnance across marshy ground, so soft that it was necessary to place them on sledges lest they should sink beyond recovery, and to each of these rude vehicles two hundred soldiers were harnessed with breast-straps and rope traces.

More than once did it seem to Phil as if he could no longer perform his share of the task, so nearly was he exhausted; but the thought that the gold presented by General Pepperrell was sufficient in amount to relieve his mother of her most pressing wants served to animate him, despite the monotony and brutish nature of the labour.

Then, when Phil was thoroughly weary with this kind

of a soldier's life, came the welcome summons to present himself at headquarters, where he found a squad of men drawn up preparatory to making a reconnoissance under the lead of Colonel Vaughan, and he soon learned he was to accompany the party.

The purpose of the movement was to ascertain the most advantageous spot at which an assault could be made.

From the manner in which the leader set about the work, it could be understood that he hoped something more might be done than simply surveying the land, for no man "enjoyed" a battle better than did the Lieutenant Colonel of the New Hampshire forces, and a skirmish did not come amiss, to his mind, when nothing more serious was possible.

Instead of proceeding directly to the spot where General Pepperrell believed artillery could be used to the best advantage, a long *détour* was made, which brought the squad on the high land north of the city, where was a heavy growth of timber to screen them from view.

Once in this place, scrutinizing the town he hoped would soon be captured, Colonel Vaughan gave little heed to his men, so intent was he in gaining all the information possible relative to the movements of the enemy, and the soldiers were allowed to ramble here and there at will, the only restriction being that they keep within hailing distance of each other.

Phil and the colonel were in a dense clump of spruce trees, and the latter was hewing off some of the branches

with his sword, in order to gain a better view of the beleaguered town, when a single report rang out, sharp and distinct, as a bullet cut the skin on the officer's face.

For an instant both the colonel and Phil thought the former was seriously wounded, but when the trifling nature of the hurt was discovered, anger succeeded fear.

"Whoever discharged that musket intended to kill me!" Colonel Vaughan exclaimed, sharply. "Hello! Where are you, men?"

The soldiers, having heard the report and fancying an attack was being made, were already coming at full speed toward their commander, and the words had hardly been spoken before all the squad were within the thicket.

"Did any of you discharge a musket just now?" Each denied in turn having done anything of the kind, and showed his loaded gun in proof of the statement.

"It isn't possible one of the enemy can be outside the city, for this portion of the island has been traversed many times by our soldiers since we landed," the officer said, in a low tone, to Phil. "There's mischief afoot, and we must know what it is. You are to stay here with the men, to make certain they do not leave the place, and I will do a little reconnoitring on my own account."



"You surely don't intend to go alone!" Phil cried, in alarm.

"I shall be safer than with companions. Do as I have bidden, and take good care to keep a sharp watch on all the men."

The colonel disappeared amid the underbrush as he ceased speaking, and Phil tried in vain to fancy who could have any cause of enmity against so kind an officer.

Just once did his thoughts wander to Dick Sanbourne, but he dismissed the subject immediately, for he had good reason to believe that young gentleman was secure behind the walls of the city.

Colonel Vaughan was absent half an hour, and when he returned, the men were ordered back to headquarters, although the purpose for which they came out had not been accomplished.

Phil asked no questions relative to what might have been discovered; but before the march had come to an end, the colonel said, in a low tone, as if fearful his words would be overheard by those in the rear,—

"Do you want to know what I saw a short distance from where we were standing when that shot was fired?"

"I do, unless you wish to keep it a secret."

"Not from you, lad; for I expect you will aid me in solving the mystery. The footprints of a man were plain upon the turf, and I even saw where he rested his gun to take aim. That would n't have been so very surprising, since we know perfectly well some one was there, but I believe it was a member of our own regiment!"

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"Why do you think so, sir?" Phil asked, in astonishment.

"Because of the footprints. I could almost swear the boots which made them came from old Tyson's shop. There is n't a cobbler in the colonies, and it goes without saying that there are none in France who cuts such a peculiar sole; the toe is the widest part of it."

"But who among our men would try to kill you, sir?"

"That is exactly what I propose to find out, if possible. When we arrive at headquarters you are to go directly to your shanty, and wait until I come, which will probably not be till late in the evening."

After giving this order the colonel relapsed into a silence which was not broken until the command was dismissed in front of the hut occupied by General Pepperrell.

Phil did as he had been bidden, and there remained, listening to the roaring of the guns from the advanced battery, wishing he was at liberty to go where he could see what execution was being done.

At sunset no word had been received from the colonel, and the boy built a small fire in front of the hut with which to cook the meal that made up his portion of the day's rations.

The cannon were still being worked, and from time to time squads of men passed him on their way to watch the gunners. More than one invited Phil to follow, but he shook his head. The order was to remain in his camp, and he did not intend to disobey, whatever might be the attraction at the front.

The evening passed, and yet no word from the colonel.

One by one the men off duty sought the shelter of their poor apologies for tents, until not a person was to be seen within Phil's range of vision.

He piled his camp-fire high with wood, and laid down in front of it. The earth no longer trembled under the detonations of the cannon; the sighing of the wind could be heard from among the trees, and the monotonous murmur of the surf wooed the tired boy to slumber.

Then came a time when he fancied he heard in a dream his own name called softly, but not until it had been repeated several times did he realize that it was a reality, and not the result of a vision.

Once he understood this fact, he sprang to his feet, rubbing his eyes to free them from the mist of slumber, but there was no person to be seen.

"It must have been a dream after all, and yet it sounded wonderfully distinct," he muttered to himself; and then, observing that the fire was burning low, he began collecting fuel with which to replenish it, when from his hut came a hoarse whisper:

"Keep the flame down! Can't you understand that I don't want to be seen here?"

Phil's surprise was so great as to amount almost to bewilderment, for he recognized Dick Sanbourne's voice.

"Come in, can't you?" the invisible speaker added, in a tone of irritation. "I don't propose to lay around here all night while your wits are wool-gathering."

Phil entered the shanty, by no means pleased to meet his old friend again.

CHAPTER IV.

A CONFESSION.

DICK acted as if he had good cause for complaint because Phil did not give him a hearty greeting, and said in an injured tone, —

"You don't seem very glad to see me!"

"I am not."

"You're getting stuck up because Bill Vaughan has taken you under his wing; that's what's the matter."

"I did n't know he had 'taken me under his wing,' as you call it. I have tried to do my duty —"

"For which you are to get nearly a sixpence a day, if the colony can raise money enough to pay the men who have enlisted," Dick interrupted, with a sneer.

"Yes, that was the amount agreed upon, and we have no right to find fault. There has been no change in the price since the day on which we enlisted, and then it seemed sufficient."

"So it would have been had Storer's stories turned out true; we were to come on a pleasure excursion, and be paid for it. Instead, we were sent down here to be killed."

"There has n't been any very great slaughter thus far."

"Wait till the city is assaulted, and then you will see the blood run. Louisbourg is fortified so strongly that ten

times the number of men at Pepperrell's command could n't force an entrance."

"I admit there is good reason for you to speak so positively; but tell me why you are not behind the walls now? Did the French suspect you?"

"I never went back to find out. You said so much about what might be done, I concluded it was n't safe."

"And it would have been very dangerous, I firmly believe. If suspicion had arisen that you had visited our men just before the battery was abandoned, it would have been a short shrift for you."

"Most likely I should have pulled through all right; but I am willing to confess you frightened me, and I steered clear of both parties until hunger has driven me here."

"Where have you been staying?"

"In the woods."

"You might have been taken by some of our men."

"It's easy to keep clear of them. I got along all right while my ammunition held out; but now that is gone I am on precious short allowance. Instead of asking so many questions, why not give me something to eat? I am nearly starved."

Phil believed, from the visitor's tone, that he was speaking the truth, and his sympathies were aroused.

The only food he had was a portion of the hasty-pudding made that evening; but he set it before Dick, who ate as if he was indeed nearly famished.

"If I had known there was a chance you would come, I'd saved more; but, supposing you safe inside Louis-

bourg, the possibility that others might need my rations never occurred to me. Say, Dick, do you realize that each day makes your case worse?"

"In what way?" the visitor asked, speaking indistinctly, because his mouth was so full of pudding.

"After it is known you have been hanging around so long in the enemy's service, there will be less sympathy felt when you ask for pardon."

"Do you think I'm going to do anything of that kind, especially to Bill Vaughan?"

"But you must, otherwise how will you get home?"

"I can work that part of it all right," was the confident reply.

"How?"

"There'll soon be a vessel sailing for Boston, and I shall smuggle myself on board. The voyage won't be so long but that I can remain stowed away until she arrives."

"But even then you won't dare go to Portsmouth."

"Wouldn't I? Just give me the chance, that's all!"

"But don't you fear being arrested as a deserter?"

"Bill Vaughan won't talk so loud when we are home again. My father can fix everything, once I am there."

Phil believed the crime of desertion would not be passed over so readily, even though Dick's father was reputed to be a wealthy man; but he forbore from pressing the matter further. It could easily be seen that the visitor fancied anything he might do could be atoned for with money, and it would be useless to make an attempt to convince him to the contrary.

Dick ate that which had been set before him, and then looked around hungrily for more.

"That was all I had," Phil said, interpreting the look. "If you will wait, perhaps I can borrow something from the man who is encamped close at hand."

"Don't try it!" Dick said, sharply, when Phil made a motion to leave the shanty. "I haven't got any too much confidence in you, and don't propose that word shall be sent to Bill Vaughan."

"I didn't betray you before, therefore why should I do so now?"

"I won't give you a chance; there's no knowing what you might do for the sake of a pound or two out of my capture."

"I am not so fond of money as that. If it was really my duty to tell of your being on the island, I should do it at all hazards."

"You're a canting hypocrite—" Dick checked himself suddenly, as if he had spoken more plainly than was his intention, and added, in a coaxing tone, "Look here, Phil, we've always been friends, and you know I'm willing to do you a good turn at any time, so now do one for me when I am in such trouble."

"What do you want?"

"Powder and ball. With plenty of ammunition, I can shoot game enough to keep me alive until a vessel sails for Boston."

"I have n't got very much," and Phil shook his powder-horn.

"It'll do till I come again," Dick said, as he stretched out his hand for the horn. "If I had n't wasted that shot this afternoon I need n't have come to-night, and, perhaps, by a lucky turn, might have found a chance to leave this place without your knowing anything about it."

Phil was on the point of handing the powder to his companion when the latter spoke; but suddenly he drew



it back as he looked intently at Dick, his face paling because of his newly-aroused suspicions.

"What is the matter?" the visitor asked, sharply, alarmed at the change which had come over his friend. "What is the matter? Why don't you speak, instead of staring in that way?"

"Dick Sanbourne," Phil said, in a low, accusing tone, "it was you who tried to shoot Colonel Vaughan this afternoon!"

For an instant Dick acted as if about to deny the accusation, and then spoke angrily:

"Well, what if it was? Is that any business of yours?"

"It certainly is. My duty is to protect, or assist in doing so, our officers, and —"

"I suppose you're running this whole war, aint you? *You* protect the officers! You'd better go back to your mother, where you belong, and not play at being a soldier any longer. I shall settle my score with Bill Vaughan before I leave here, and you can't prevent me, mighty as you act now."

"I shall do my best," Phil replied, gravely, as he attempted to rise to his feet.

Dick, who had been seated between Phil and the entrance to the shanty, sprang to his feet before the latter could change his position, and, pushing him back with one hand, twisted the powder-horn from his grasp with the other.

Then, raising his musket as a club, he said in a guarded tone, —

"Make one attempt to give an alarm, and I will strike you down! I don't intend to be drawn over the coals when a blow will settle it all! Give me that!"

Before Phil had fairly recovered from the surprise caused by the sudden change in his former friend, the latter made a clutch at the pouch containing bullets, which was on the ground near the bed of pine boughs.

"Now I've got all I need, and can take care of myself. I know this island better than any of these make-believe soldiers, for I've been all over it, so it won't make any difference if you do raise an alarm. None of your crowd can catch me, especially after dark."

Phil was not disposed to let the boy go to his own destruction without making one more effort to prevent it and he said, in a kindly tone, —

"Stop, Dick, and think of what you are doing! It is a mistake to believe your father can smooth matters over, and by defying the whole colonial army in that way, you cannot fail to make an outlaw of yourself. There is time even now to take a different course."

"Yes, after you know I shot at Bill Vaughan!"

"Suppose I promise never to tell what you have said?"

"It won't be safe to repeat the least word, remember that!"

"It is my duty, and I must tell everything to-night, unless you are willing to give yourself up. I feel certain matters may be arranged now, if nothing is known of the shooting, and you can take your proper place with us once more."

"I suppose you think you're precious good, eh? Trying to play the mighty over me because you've got on the right side of that Vaughan! I'll attend to my own affairs, and yours, too, if you dare tell a single person that I've been here!"

Then, standing over Phil to prevent him from rising, Dick coolly loaded his musket, hung the horn and pouch about his person, and moved slightly toward the door.

"If you show yourself outside this shanty for the next hour, I'll shoot you down," he said, threateningly. "I can hide among the trees, and there's yet light enough from your fire for me to see if you sneak out. Keep a close

tongue in your head about me and my affairs, or you'll never reach Portsmouth again."

Phil was too deeply engaged in thought to make any reply to these threats. He knew it was his duty to raise an alarm, regardless of whatever danger might threaten him; but if he should do so, and Dick was taken prisoner, there could be but one end to it all. To give his old friend up would be condemning him to death without a shadow of doubt, and that he shrank from doing.

Dick waited a few moments at the door of the shanty, as if to assure himself he could gain the shelter of the woods without being seen by the sentinels near the water's edge, and then, with a mocking "good-by," disappeared.

"What shall I do?" Phil cried when he was alone. "If I tell that he is on the island, the men will soon catch him, and even though I'm not very much of a soldier, I know full well what will be the result."

Then came the thought that he would confide in Colonel Vaughan, keeping back the fact that it was Dick who fired the shot which grazed the officer's cheek, and plead with him to use his influence in having the deserter punished only by being sent home in disgrace.

This seemed the best way out of the difficulty which Dick had brought upon himself, and Phil had but just decided he would try the experiment when a commanding voice was heard, apparently but a short distance from the shanty.

"Halt, or I'll fire!"

Then came a noise as of scuffling and the words in the same voice:

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"Don't make the mistake of trying that game! So, it *was* you? I had just a suspicion this afternoon when I saw your footprints. Now march ahead of me, and turn ever so slightly to the right or the left if you wish to die!"

It was Colonel Vaughan who had spoken, and Phil understood Dick was a prisoner. The officer knew him as the would-be assassin, and, such being the case, the deserter's doom was indeed sealed.

Phil sat silent and motionless, sick with apprehension regarding the boy whom he had called a friend, when Dick and his captor entered, the former pale as death, and the latter holding a pistol close to his head.

"I had an idea my trap would work," Colonel Vaughan said to Phil, and the boy repeated, in amazement,—

"Your trap, sir?"

"Yes; I ordered you to remain here, believing this deserter would pay you a visit if there were not too many around."

"How did you know he was alive?" Phil asked, in a tremulous voice.

"I had no suspicion of it until I saw the prints of Tyson's shoes, and they could be explained in no other way. Sanbourne was the only member of our regiment missing, and I concluded, without being able to explain how it happened, that he had contrived to save his life. Now call some of the men, and we'll have him taken care of for the night."

Phil obeyed by going to the nearest huts, and in a few

moments Dick was marched away, his hands tied behind his back to prevent the possibility of an escape.

Colonel Vaughan remained behind, and when they were alone Phil asked, falteringly, —

“Did you know — Did you hear —”

“I saw him when he came, and waited where I could overhear all that was said, for I wanted his own version of the story. You should have told me he was here.”

“It would have been the same as condemning him to death, sir, and I could n't have done that, for he and I have always been good friends.”

“He acted particularly friendly toward you, I should judge, from what I heard.”

“He is desperate. This soldiering is different from what he expected would be, and —”

“There is no reason why you should try to find excuses for him, lad,” the officer said, as Phil hesitated. “Tell me when you have seen him before.”

Phil related in detail the story of Dick's visit on the night the battery was abandoned, and concluded by saying, —

“If he could be made to understand how serious his offence is, I am sure he would act differently.”

“He will probably find out when he is brought up for trial.”

“Then you are to send him home?”

“There is no necessity for that. A court-martial will soon settle the matter, and while we are in the field there will be little chance for interference in his behalf.”

"But, Colonel!" Phil cried, in an agony of fear, "you will not suffer any harm to come—I mean that you will not allow him to be shot for deserting?"

"It is not probable I shall have any voice in the matter. A certain important movement will be made soon, and I am to have charge of it. Remain here until I send for you, and try not to distress yourself over such a worthless character as Sanbourne has shown himself to be."

With this advice Colonel Vaughan left the shanty, and Phil threw himself face downward upon the bed in bitterest distress of mind.

CHAPTER V.

A NIGHT ATTACK.

IT was little sleep Phil had on the night Dick was captured. He could not drive away the fear that he had been instrumental in bringing about the present condition of affairs, although it was impossible to explain even to himself how that could be.

Horrible visions of his friend on the scaffold rose constantly before his eyes, and more than one wild scheme for saving the misguided boy came into his mind, only to be dismissed as impracticable.

"I would do anything, regardless of my duty as a soldier, to save him from a shameful death," he said, over and over again; "but there is no way by which I can aid him, except through the kindness of Colonel Vaughan, whom he tried to kill."

Until late on the following afternoon he was left to his own painful reflections, and then came a messenger with word that he was wanted at headquarters.

Almost any kind of action was preferable to remaining idle, with no companion but the terrible thoughts which would not be banished, and Phil hastened to obey the summons.

It was necessary to remain outside General Pepperrell's quarters some time before Colonel Vaughan was ready to

receive him, and the boy had ample opportunity to question the sentinel on duty.

"Do you know what was done with the prisoner taken last night?" he asked, and such discipline as was enforced in the encampment did not prevent the soldier from halting in front of Phil as he replied by another question:

"Did you know the young scoundrel?"



"We both live in Portsmouth, and he has always been my friend."

"He won't play the friend to any one much longer."

"What do you mean?" Phil asked, the words coming with difficulty from his trembling lips, because he knew full well what the answer would be.

"He'll be hanged, as he deserves, of course."

"But he's only a boy, — a few months more than sixteen years old."

"If he was n't half that age the punishment would n't

be any too severe. I hear he's been over to the enemy, and most likely has told them all he knows. Then, again, he tried to kill Colonel Vaughan, which is good reason for the sentence that will surely be pronounced."

Phil remained silent several moments, during which the soldier resumed his leisurely pacing to and fro.

Then the boy asked timidly, as he walked by the side of the man,—

"Don't you think General Pepperrell will pardon him? It can't be he would allow the son of one he has always been friendly with to be hanged."

"If I believed there was any danger the young fiend would escape death I'd shoot him down this minute!" the soldier cried, angrily, and Phil turned away in despair.

This man's opinion was probably shared by many, if not all, of his comrades, and the deserter's friend began to understand that perhaps he was the only person in the encampment who sympathized with the prisoner.

At this moment Colonel Vaughan appeared, and leading the boy a few paces aside, said in a low tone,—

"It had been promised that I should lead an attack this night; but the men have stipulated for Captain Brooks to command them, and I am forced to lose the sport or follow as a private, therefore I cannot take you with me."

"Shall you volunteer?"

"Certainly. The plan is all my own, and I want to see how it is carried out."

"Then what prevents me from doing the same thing?"

"You can if you choose, and I'll be glad to have you. Brooks is not the kind of a man who will take advice from me, and we shall be obliged to follow his instructions, whether they be wise or not; but there will be plenty of fighting, which is what all of us need just now."

"In what way shall I volunteer?" Phil asked, thinking he would rather be engaged in any dangerous service than remain in camp dwelling upon Dick's terrible fate.

"I will attend to that part of it. We should go now, for the expedition starts from the Grand Battery, and there is no time to lose, if we would join the party."

Phil was ready as soon as he replenished his supply of ammunition, and the two set out in silence. Colonel Vaughan was in no mood for conversation, because of his disappointment at not being allowed to lead the assaulting party, while Phil could think only of his former friend.

On arriving at their destination Colonel Vaughan went directly to Brigadier Waldo, who still remained in charge of the battery abandoned by the French, and then it was that Phil began to realize the danger which might be encountered.

"As the matter is being arranged," Waldo said to his friend, "it is a foolhardy piece of business, and can only result in disaster. I have written to the general that I doubt most seriously whether straggling fellows, three, four, or seven out of a company, ought to go on such a service, for there will be no concert of action among them. What makes it the more foolish, is that many of them are under the influence of liquor, and should be under guard,

instead of trying to surprise a detachment of regulars within particularly strong works."

Then the brigadier was summoned by one of his officers who was superintending the making ready of the boats, and Phil asked,—

"What is the service we are going on?"

"I have proposed that an assault be made upon the Island Battery, which commands the harbour, and prevents our ships from entering. I believe the works could be carried, but not in such a way as is to be tried."

"Do you still intend to accompany the party, sir?"

"Most certainly; but since matters are in the condition described by Waldo, perhaps you had better remain behind."

"I would prefer to go with you, sir."

"Very well, then, we'll say no more about it. Stay here where I can find you without difficulty, and I'll take a turn around the battery."

Three hours later Phil saw the colonel again, and the moment had arrived for departure. It was so dark when he stood on the beach that he could not decide how many boats were to be used to transport the soldiers, but in the gloom it appeared as if there must have been at least twenty.

He followed the colonel into one of them, which already appeared overloaded, and the frail craft was paddled, instead of rowed, out over the wind-swept waters, the boisterous waves dashing over her gunwale every few seconds, obliging the men to bail incessantly in order to keep her afloat.

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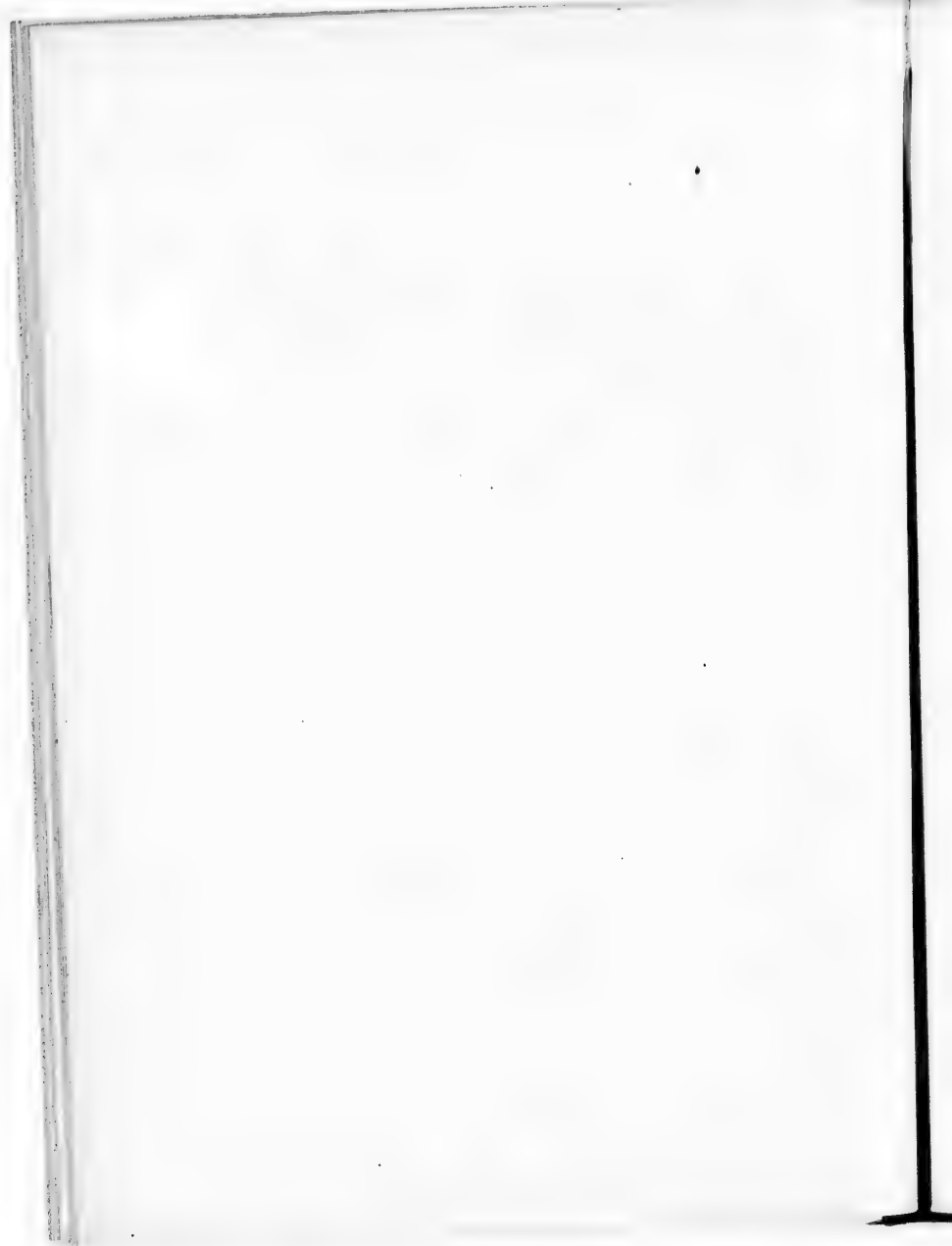
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Then came the dangerous work of disembarking while the surf was dashing high upon the rocks on either side of the narrow cove, and when about half the force were on shore, they broke the silence by three cheers, regardless of the fact that they had come for the purpose of *surprising* the enemy.

"That settles the fate of this attempt," Colonel Vaughan said, in a low, angry tone to Phil. "I cannot understand what Brooks is thinking of to let the men announce their presence when he is not prepared for the attack!"

Before a reply could have been made to this remark a sudden glare illumined the darkness in the immediate vicinity of the battery, and from out of it came a perfect hail of iron missiles. It seemed to Phil as if every living thing on that narrow strip of shore must be mowed down by the shower of balls and bullets, yet he himself remained untouched after the deadly fire had continued several seconds.

Finally, high above the roaring of the heavy guns, could be heard the command of Captain Brooks for his men to advance, and Colonel Vaughan cried to Phil, —

"It is little less than suicide, lad; but we must not be the ones to show the white feather. It is simply a slaughter of the men, without possibility of success; yet we are bound to obey orders."

After the first flush of fear Phil forgot the danger, and eager to prove to the officer who had shown him so much kindness that he was not a coward, pressed boldly forward, stumbling here over the bodies of the fallen, or

making a *détour* there to avoid a group who were shooting at the stone walls, regardless of their commander's orders.

Phil was at the very foot of the works, where scaling-ladders were being raised, and had already begun to ascend one when a bright flash burst directly in his eyes; there came a sudden sensation of numbness, and all was a blank.

When next he was conscious, an intense pain asserted itself in his left shoulder; it seemed as if his clothing had been glued to that portion of his body, and he was rising and falling as though suspended in mid-air.

"Where am I?" he asked, feebly, surprised that it was not possible to speak louder.

"With a dozen or more nearly as badly wounded as yourself, heading for our own side of the harbour," a voice replied.

"Am I wounded?"

"That you are, and badly, so I'm told. I've lost part of one foot, but *that's* a hurt I shall soon get over."

Phil fancied the man intended to convey the idea that he might not recover, and he mildly wondered whether death in such a form would be painful.

"You can thank Colonel Vaughan that you're here, instead of being left on the beach at the mercy of the enemy. He it was who lugged you on his back through the surf, when it was all a man could do to care for himself, much less come off hampered with a burden."

"Is the colonel safe?" Phil asked, after a brief silence.

"Ay, that he is, and in one of the other boats. If he had had command of this expedition, I'm thinking we would n't be crawling back like disabled crabs, leaving behind half of those who started out with us."

"Then it has all been a failure?"

"Yes, so far as the Island Battery is concerned, and weak leadership killed the only chance we had of taking it; but the city will fall into our hands some day, please God, and I'll have given one foot toward the general result, though it seems a wicked waste of flesh and blood to give them up in such a foolish attack as this has proved to be."

Phil heard the last words but faintly; the pain of his wounds was rapidly overcoming him, and before the boat with her cargo of suffering humanity gained the land he was unconscious again.

When he next realized anything, he heard a strange voice say, —

"He may pull through, with youth and strength on his side; but it will be a narrow squeeze. Do not attempt to move him, and in forty-eight hours we shall know the result."

Phil was lying on a softer bed than he had enjoyed since leaving home, and without touching those portions of his body which were causing him so much pain, he knew the wounds had been bandaged.

Once he fancied Colonel Vaughan bent over him, laying a cool hand on his burning head; but it was impossible to distinguish either word or action very clearly. He was in a stupor not unlike a disagreeable dream.

At times the pain seemed overpowering, and then he would sink into what might have been a swoon, only to arouse suddenly to the knowledge that he had been seriously wounded, — was, perhaps, dying.

He was in a log hut, which evidently contained two apartments, and in front of the inner door a soldier stood, as if on guard.

It was day when he understood this much, and he believed but a few hours after the disastrous attack had been made.

When next he took note of his surroundings, another night had come. Only he and the sentinel were in the room, and he wondered why a guard should be there.

He moved slightly, and the soldier stepped quickly to his side.

"Are you here to take care of me?" Phil whispered, and the man shook his head.

"I'm on duty to make certain that young deserter don't slip through our fingers again," and the sentinel pointed toward the door.

Instantly he understood it all. Dick was confined in the next room, and since the hut had not been built strongly enough for a prison, a guard was stationed over him.

"Do you think they will punish him?" he next asked.

"That they will! Bless you, it has all been settled in proper order. When the sun rises again you won't be troubled by having a sentinel here."

During a moment Phil believed he was on the point of

swooning once more. "When the sun rises again!" That was as much as if the man had said when another day dawned Dick Sanbourne would pay the extreme penalty for his misdeeds!

The wounded boy struggled desperately to resist the sensation of faintness which was creeping over him. He believed it was absolutely necessary to retain possession of all his faculties, although he had no idea that it might be possible for him to aid the condemned prisoner.

When the sentinel took up his station by the door again, Phil began to wonder why it was the trial and sentence had followed so quickly. He knew nothing had been done in that way when he left headquarters with Colonel Vaughan, and yet the entire matter seemed to be settled.

It was a long while before he managed to whisper,—

"When did — did Dick have his trial?"

"The day before yesterday."

"Why, it was then we made the attack."

"You've lost run of the days, lad, that's all."

"How long have I been here?"

"You were wounded Monday night, and to-morrow is Saturday."

CHAPTER VI.

AN APPEAL.

GRIEVOUSLY wounded though he was, Phil forgot his own suffering as he thought of the mental agony which the unhappy prisoner must be enduring.

It was almost maddening to realize that he was powerless to stay the sentence of the military court,—that a boy, who until lately had been his friend, would soon be executed.

For an instant he resolved to demand an audience with General Pepperrell, in order to beg for pardon; but a brief time of reflection was sufficient to convince him that the general would not listen to his prayer against the judgment of his officers.

Could Colonel Vaughan effect anything? Phil doubted if that were possible, or, being so, whether he would make an effort to save the life of one who had tried to murder him.

The sentinel, at a loss to account for his sudden silence, drew nearer the couch to look at the wounded boy.

"What time is it?" he asked of the man.

"It lacks about half an hour of midnight, when I shall be relieved."

"Would you do me a favour?"

"Of course I would, lad! I'm told you showed true

grit at the assault when the odds were all against our side, and I'm not the only one who is proud of what you have done."

"I want to speak with the prisoner a moment. He and I are old friends; we came from the same town; I cannot bear to think of his being led away to a cruel death before I have had a chance to say good-by."

"I don't know why you shouldn't go in," the sentinel said, thoughtfully, "though it won't be a very pleasant visit. The doctor might think you oughtn't to move around so much, for he said it wouldn't be safe to carry you to Colonel Vaughan's quarters, and he is lodged but a short distance away."

"It can do me no harm, — surely not as much as lying here eating my heart out with sorrow for the poor fellow," and Phil made one attempt to rise, but fell back utterly exhausted with the faint effort.

"That young villain isn't worth a thought from you," the soldier said, emphatically, as in his rude way he tried to move the invalid's head to a more comfortable position.

"You wouldn't say so if he was an old friend of yours."

"Perhaps not, lad, perhaps not. It don't stand to reason you're hardened to such things yet; but you soon will be if you continue soldiering."

"I must go to see him," Phil cried, and again he attempted unsuccessfully to move.

"Come, come, we can't have anything more like that," the sentinel said, in what he intended should be a sooth-

ing tone. "Another struggle and you'll set the blood to flowing. It would be the price of your life to walk from here to where he is."

"I can't help it; I'm determined to go if such a thing be possible. Most likely it's my last chance."

"But I won't allow you to take the risk," and now the soldier spoke sternly. "That fellow isn't worth the pain you're enduring through him, and I'll put a stop to it."

"Do you mean you won't let me go where he is?"

"I'll bring him here. I reckon it isn't jest what a sentinel oughter do; but if you're bent on seeing him, it shall be done. I've had no orders agin it, and will be bound there ain't the least show of his getting away while I stand at the door."

The man did not wait for Phil to reply, but went at once to the inner room, and the invalid trembled with excitement as he waited for his comrade who was so soon to be put to death.

The interview was not long delayed.

Phil could hear a confused sound, which he fancied was caused by the efforts of the soldier to remove the fetters from the prisoner's limbs, and then Dick appeared.

Had he seen him anywhere else Phil would not have recognized him as the lad who sailed from Portsmouth in the good sloop "Vigilant."

He no longer walked erect, with head carried well back, as if glorying in his youth and strength, but was bent, like an old man, while on every feature of his face was written the story of most abject terror.

"Oh, Phil! Phil!" he cried, coming forward as fast as the soldier would permit, and throwing himself down by the wounded boy's side. "Does it seem *possible* that they have the right to kill me! Save me, Phil! Save me! I know you can, because every one is telling how brave you have been!"

"Poor Dick! Poor Dick!" and Phil laid his hand on



the boy's head. "It is hard, oh, *so* hard! but I can do nothing. No one would listen to me."

"There is not another person here who will speak for me, and you *must* do something! I can't die now! I *can't*, Phil, and I have n't a friend left, for every one thinks death is only what I deserve."

"There's no use in going on that way," the sentinel said, gruffly. "You won't do yourself any good, and I sha'n't allow you to make Phil worse by such outcries."

You should have thought of all this back there at Canseau, where you set up in opposition to all hands."

"I didn't think they would dare to kill me."

"And because of not thinking, many another person has got himself into trouble. If there's anything you want to say privately to Phil, go ahead; I'll give you one chance, though I've precious little sympathy for you, by going near the door where I sha'n't overhear what's said. You must talk fast, though, for the relief will be coming soon."

The soldier stepped back near the outside door, and, leaning over the wounded boy, Dick continued in whispers to beg him to save his life.

It was most distressing to Phil. Gladly would he have given anything, — everything, simply to soothe the distracted prisoner, yet there was nothing he could say.

After his first outburst Dick appeared to grow calmer, and whispered, cautiously, —

"Except for the fact that I am tied hand and foot, I could have escaped at almost any time within the last two days. Couldn't you give me one chance, Phil? Just think how horrible it will be to die in such a way! *Can't* you make up your mind to help me?"

"What *could* I do, Dick?"

"There must be a chance between now and daylight to untie the ropes — I only ask you to untie one! I can get through the side of the hut, where a couple of logs are loose."

"But even then what would you do?"

"I don't know, Phil. Hide in the woods till the troops leave; it would be better to starve there than be hanged like a dog to-morrow morning."

"I reckon you two had best be parted now; there's no use spending a long time when it must come at last, and the sooner this thing is ended the better for both," the sentinel said, gruffly, as he came toward the bed.

Phil had just time before the man forced Dick away to whisper in the despairing boy's ear, —

"If there's the least chance for me to do what you want, I will, and watch as anxiously as you would for the opportunity."

Then the prisoner was led back; the ropes fastened once more around his limbs, as Phil fancied from the sound, and the sentinel returned to his post.

The invalid closed his eyes, that he might the better think of what he had promised, and while he was thus apparently resting comfortably, the sentinel who was to guard the condemned until the last moment arrived.

The two men spoke together in low tones a few seconds, and then he who had been so kind took his departure.

Unless an opportunity to assist Dick should occur within three hours it would be too late, and Phil realized that he must be fully alive to everything around him. A short time previous it had been impossible to so much as raise his head; but now he was resolved to get into the next room, if he could do so secretly, even though at the cost of his own life.

The sentinel looked in at the prisoner; paced to and

fro from one door to another, and then seated himself near the invalid's bed.

Watching eagerly from beneath his half-closed lids, Phil saw the man nod from time to time, and it was evident he was doing his best to fight off the inclination to slumber.

Finally he seemed to realize that it would be impossible to keep his eyes open while in this position, for he leaped suddenly to his feet, and began walking back and forth energetically.

Ten minutes passed in this exercise, and then the soldier drew from his pocket a pipe and knife.

"Blest if I've got so much as a crumb of tobacco," he muttered, after searching his pockets carefully. "I can't stay here all night without a smoke!"

Glancing first at the door of the room in which the prisoner was confined, and then toward the wounded boy, the sentinel stood irresolutely in the centre of the apartment while one might have counted twenty.

"There's no risk in going, for this boy is too weak to help himself, and the other is tied where he can't do more 'n wink. There's precious little danger of meeting an officer around the encampment at this time of the night; all hands of 'em like their comfort too well to turn out when there's no particular reason for so doing."

Leaving his gun leaning against the wall, he went out into the night, and the opportunity so ardently desired by Phil had come.

When the sound of the soldier's footsteps died away in the distance, the invalid raised himself slowly, battling

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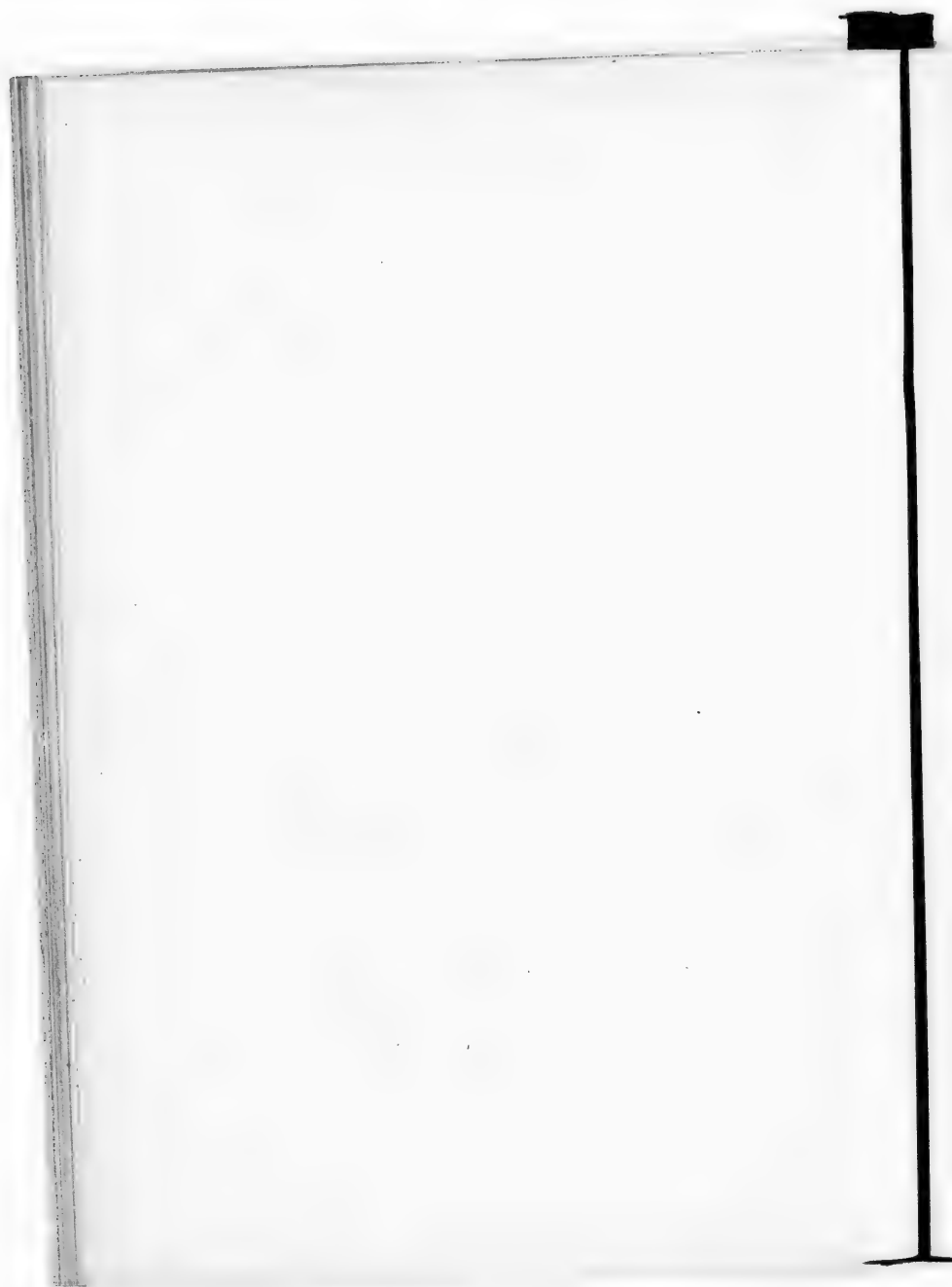
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most desperately against the deathly faintness which threatened to overcome him, and stood swaying from side to side like one who has received a mortal blow.

Twice did he make the attempt before gaining the door, and then he lurched into the room where Dick lay, unable to guide his own steps.

How he succeeded in unfastening the ropes he never knew ; but finally, he was dimly conscious of the fact that it had been done, and made a supreme effort to regain the bed.

He realized, or thought he did, that the prisoner thanked him fervently, and promised sacredly he should never regret having given him a chance for life ; but the words were more like a murmur of the sea, which even then was beating against the rocky coast to give warning of a fast-gathering storm.

From that instant the thunder of all the guns which had been hurling death and destruction into the doomed city would not have been heard by him.

When the sentinel returned with the tobacco which had seemed so necessary to his comfort, Phil was lying on the bed with the blood flowing from his mouth, apparently dead.

More than once had the doctor stated that the invalid might die suddenly of hemorrhage, and the frightened sentinel believed the predictions were fulfilled.

Without stopping to look in upon the prisoner, he ran with all speed for the physician, and the moment for Dick's escape had arrived.

When Phil next opened his eyes to the things of this world he was lying on such a bed as he had never dreamed of before, in a room bright with gay hangings, and bearing everywhere the marks of a woman's hand.

By the side of the bed sat Colonel Vaughan, who was regarding the pale, wasted boy with something very like affection, as he said, triumphantly,—

"I knew, under Madame Pinchon's motherly care, you would recover, even though the doctor did insist you must surely die!"

"What has happened?" Phil asked, in a tone so low that it was hardly more than a whisper.

"Many things, my boy, which it will give you pleasure to hear, the most important being that the city was surrendered nearly a week ago, and you are now quartered in the home of a certain Antoine Pinchon, whose lodger I also am. A vessel sailed for Boston shortly before the capitulation, and General Pepperrell sent a purse of money to your mother, which will relieve her of all pecuniary troubles for some time to come. Finally, you have been acting the part of a dead boy for nearly three weeks, and it is high time you began to assume the bearing of a live one."

Phil waited to hear more, but the colonel leaned back in his chair as if his budget of news was exhausted.

"Do you know anything about,—is Dick alive?"

"Look here, my boy, do you chance to know anything of his escape?"

"I helped him, and want to make a confession to the general."

"I suspected you had a hand in the matter, and advise you to remain silent on the subject. No good can come of making any confession, and the least said is the soonest mended. It may interest you to know, however, that he has left the island."

"How did you learn that?"

"One of the natives told me he had seen the boy



skulking in the woods, and I took it upon myself to find an opportunity for him to sail. His death would have done no good; the soldiers are so undisciplined that the execution would not have been a lesson in the truest sense, and after his painful experience he may mend his ways."

Then the colonel told the story of the siege and final surrender of the city in all its details, and concluded by

stating that Phil was to be sent home in the next vessel that sailed after he was sufficiently strong to undertake the journey.

Parkman writes :

"The news that Louisbourg was taken reached Boston at one o'clock in the morning of the 3rd of July, by a vessel sent express. A din of bells and cannon proclaimed it to the slumbering townsmen, and before the sun rose, the streets were filled with shouting crowds. At night every window shone with lamps, and the town was ablaze with fireworks and bonfires. The next Thursday was appointed a day of general thanksgiving for a victory believed to be the direct work of Providence. New York and Philadelphia also hailed the great news with illuminations, ringing of bells, and firing of cannon.

"In England the tidings were received with astonishment and joy that was dashed with reflections on the strength and mettle of colonists supposed already to aspire to independence. Pepperrell was made a baronet, and Warren an admiral. The merchant soldier was commissioned colonel in the British Army; a regiment was given him, to be raised in America and maintained by the king, while a similar recognition was granted to the lawyer, Shirley."

Goold writes :

"Beside being honoured with knighthood, General Pepperrell was presented by the Corporation of London with a dinner service and a silver side-table on which to display it. To my knowledge, there is no published description of this numerous table service, or the table which was made to bear it. At the time of its arrival at Kittery Point, there was, probably, no set of plate in New England approaching it in extent or elegance."

Not until thirty years had elapsed did Phil hear of or see Dick.

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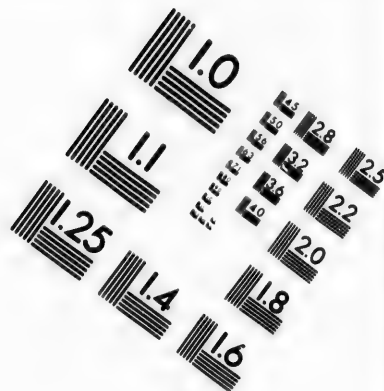
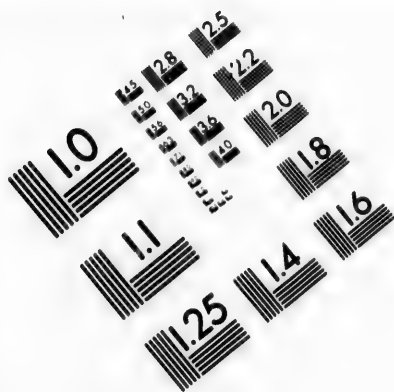
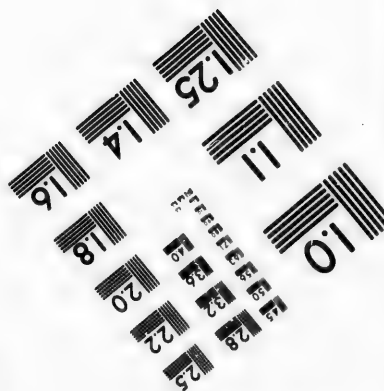
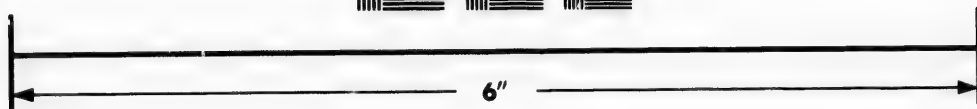
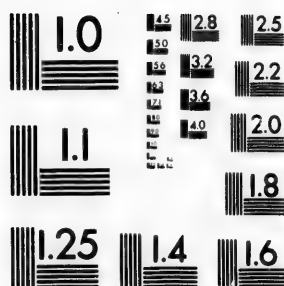


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Then he was a captain in the Continental Army, on the staff of the commander-in-chief, and visited Cambridge on military business, when he was surprised at being accosted familiarly by a private soldier belonging to a regiment from Connecticut. It was Richard Sanbourne, who, since his escape from the colonial forces in front of Louisbourg, had lived an upright, honest life, and now, as he explained to Captain Towle, was trying to redeem himself as a soldier.

THE END.

